



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## GEORGETOWN—THE ORIGINAL PLAN AND THE EARLIEST SETTLERS.

BY HENRY A. M. SMITH.

The land on which the city of Georgetown now stands does not seem to have been occupied by settlers previous to 1705. In that year it was granted by the Lords Proprietors of the Province of Carolina to John and Edward Perrie. John Perrie was a native of the parish of Youghal (near Cork) in Ireland. He had settled in the island of Antigua and was a man of wealth and position—a member of the council for Antigua and Provost Marshall General of the Leeward Islands.<sup>1</sup> On the 23rd of September, 1704, at Antigua he entered into an agreement with “John Abraham Motte then residing in said Island merchant”, to the effect that John Perrie was to ship on “the Brigantine called the *Success* rideing at Anchor on the Harbour of St Johns whereof Capt: Benjamin Quelch is pres<sup>t</sup>. Commander & is by Gods Grace bound for South Carolina upon the Maine of America” twenty five negroes and divers goods utensils etc. amounting to £2218. 19. 11. for the purposes of an intended settlement in South Carolina “to be taken up, purchased, or rented for the sole use & only in the name of the said John Perrie his heirs and assigns” by Motte according to “the good liking consent & advice of Sir Nathaniel Johnson Knt at present Chief Governour of Carolina afore-said”. Motte was to remain ten years in Carolina settle and manage the plantations and receive half the annual profits.

The *Success* with her cargo and Mr. Motte evidently arrived safely in South Carolina for he took up and settled for Mr. Perrie a plantation near Seewee (in Christ Church Parish) called “Youghal” and also on the 5th of April, 1705, procured warrants for the admeasurement of six tracts of land at Winyah.<sup>2</sup> The lands were located and

---

<sup>1</sup>*Acts of Parliament* 8 W<sup>m</sup>. III., p. 4.

<sup>2</sup>Office of the Historical Commission, Grant Book 1704-1708, p. 88.

measured off and the grants followed on the 15th of September, 1705.<sup>3</sup> Three grants were made to John Perrie for 500, 200, and 100 acres respectively, two to Edward Perrie (his brother) for 500 and 100 acres and one to Madam Elizabeth Elliott (his sister) for 1900 acres. The grant to John Perrie for 500 acres is described as bounding North on "Wahaw" River and East on "Weenea" River; and the grant to him for 200 acres bounds South on "Sampeet" Creek; so these two grants would appear to include the site of the city of Georgetown. All of the tracts included in the six grants were contiguous and contained according to the grants 3300 acres, covering the area south of Weehaw Creek between Black and Pee Dee rivers, Winyah Bay and Sampit River and the present road from Sampit to Black River and including the city of Georgetown and its suburbs and the plantations known as Weehaw, Kensington, Rosemont, and Willow Bank.

The selection presumably was made as required by the agreement according to the "liking consent and advice" of Sir Nathaniel Johnson, the Governor, and certainly justified the confidence placed on his good judgment.

The record does not disclose how or when the tracts granted to his brother Edward and his sister Mrs. Elliott passed to John Perrie. It must have been prior to 1708. In that year John Perrie, who had removed to England and resided at St. James Westminster, made his will whereby after some legacies (including £300. to the Parish of Youghal) he devised all his plantations in the Province of South Carolina to his daughter Mary Perrie. John Perrie died in 1713 leaving as his executors his brother Edward (who died not long afterwards) and his daughters Anne and Dorothy. Anne married Richard Rigby, of Mistle Hall in the county of Sussex, sometime member of the Council for Jamaica and in 1723 we find Rigby and his wife appointing Thomas Gadsden and Benjamin Whitaker in South

---

<sup>3</sup>Office of Secretary of State, Vol. 38 (Proprietary Grants), pp. 516, 517, 518.

Carolina to manage all the plantations there.<sup>4</sup> Mary Perrie married in 1728 "John Cleland of the Parish of St. Peter le Poor of the City of London" and by her marriage settlement her lands in Carolina were settled upon herself and her husband with remainder to the children of the marriage. The long minority and absence of Mary Perrie after the death of her father in 1713 had resulted in the neglect of her property in South Carolina but after her marriage her husband and herself removed to South Carolina arriving some time in 1735. On their arrival they found the property at Winyah in the possession of others.

In 1710 it appears from the record that John Abraham Motte had entered into an agreement with "William Screven the elder of Craven County" to deliver in six months to him deeds of conveyance of the lands at Winyah "or 1500 acres of them" from John Perrie of London Esq.<sup>5</sup>

This William Screven the elder was the Reverend William Screven, one of the first, if not the first, Baptist Minister to come to the Province and the ancestor of the Screven family in South Carolina. Mrs. Poyas—the "Octogenarian Lady"—in her *Carolina in the Olden Times*, page 112—states that William Screven came to the Province in 1682 and located on a spot on Cooper River a few miles from Charles Town which he called "Somerton" from his English home in Somersetshire and that he died in Georgetown on the 10th of October, 1713. The same statement as to his advent into South Carolina is made in the *History of the First Baptist Church in Charleston*, published in 1881, presumably based on the authority of Mrs. Poyas.<sup>6</sup>

There is, however, upon the record no evidence of his being in the Province until 1698 when, on the 3rd of January, 1698, he purchased from John Stewart a plantation in Craven County. In 1708 he conveyed this plantation to René Ravenel and it continued in the possession of that family for nearly a century and a half, always known and called by the name of "Somerton". It probably received that name from the Rev. Mr. Screven and is the Somerton

<sup>4</sup>Mesne Conveyance records, Charleston County, book B2, p. 173.

<sup>5</sup>Office of the Historical Commission, book 1707-1711, p. 220.

<sup>6</sup>*Year Book*, City of Charleston, for 1881, appendix.

referred to by Mrs. Poyas. Mr. Screven may have died in the locality which subsequently became Georgetown in 1713, but he could not have died in Georgetown, for no town then existed or had that name been bestowed.

However that may be, the Rev. Mr. Screven seems to have come into possession of the lands at Winyah. Exactly how, it is impossible now to say. No authority from John Perrie to Motte to make this agreement appears on the record and Motte certainly never procured the deeds he undertook to procure from John Perrie.

The Rev. William Screven died before 1717 and the lands at Winyah were by his will devised to his widow, Bridget Screven, who by her will dated June 29, 1717, devised to her son Elisha Screven 1550 acres out of the whole tract, including in this 1550 acres the site of Georgetown .

The suitability of Georgetown for a town site and port about this time seems to have been borne in upon the government. In January and February, 1729/30 Governor Robert Johnson, in a communication to the Board of Trade and American Plantations, in England, informs them that many people are settled upon "Wyneau" River and conceives it necessary to lay out a Town on the settlement on that river and to make a port of entry.<sup>1</sup>

Sometime between this date and 1734 Elisha Screven had the town plan projected and laid out on the Sampit River on part of the 1550 acres devised to him by his mother. The plan has no date upon the copy we now have and nothing in the deeds on the record give the original date of the survey, but in November, 1734, Elisha Screven publishes in *The South-Carolina Gazette* that his wife will give general renunciation of her dower in Georgetown, and in December, 1734, he again gives notice in the *Gazette* that all people interested in Georgetown may procure titles from him. So, too, in the deed about to be referred to he expressly excepts all lots previously conveyed by him.

On the 16th of January, 1734 (old style—really 1735),

---

<sup>1</sup>*Collections of the South Carolina Historical Society*, Vol. II, pp. 120, 121.

Elisha Screven executed a deed of conveyance of the town to three trustees.<sup>\*</sup> This deed (or the record copy) has a copy of the town plan annexed to it, and it is this copy plan which is published as an accompaniment to this article in the present number of this magazine. The conveyance is in the form of an indenture between "Elisha Scriven of the Parish of Prince George Winyaw" and Hannah, his wife, and George Pawley, William Swinton, and Daniel LaRoche, all of Craven County, trustees. The deed recites that William Screven, father of the said Elisha Screven, in his lifetime, and Elisha Screven, since his father's death, had been in possession of 1550 acres, in the Parish of Prince George, Winyah, and that Elisha Screven desires "to promote and encourage the Settlement of Winyaw and to allot Two hundred and seventy four and half acres thereof for a Township and Common thereunto adjoining as well for the Defence and Security of the Inhabitants of Winyah aforesaid as for advancing the Trade and Commerce of that part of the said Province and for the Building and Erecting of Churches and Publick Places of Divine Worship and for the Building and Erecting a School for the advancement of Learning and other pious and Charitable uses".

The deed thereupon conveys to the Trustees 174½ acres "for a Town to be called by the name of George Town as the same has been already laid out by said Elisha Screven into lots", and also 100 acres for the purposes of a common for the use of the inhabitants of the town.

It makes the following specific provisions:

Lot 227, containing 2 acres, is "for a lot or Place whereon to build a Church for the performance of Divine Worship and Celebration of the Sacraments as the same is now used in the Church of England as by law Established and for a Church Yard for Christian Burial". Such of the inhabitants of the town as are of the Church of England to have the election and appointment of the Rector.

Lot 226, containing one acre, is "for a lot or Place whereon to build a Presbyterian Meeting House for performance of Divine Worship and Celebration of Sacraments accord-

---

<sup>\*</sup>Probate Court records, Charleston, book 1751-54, p. 262.

ing to the Doctrine and Discipline of the Church of Scotland or what is now commonly used amongst English Presbyterians as the Majority of the Inhabitants in the said Town being English or Scotch Presbyterians shall agree when they shall & do cause to build a Presbyterian Meeting house therein and for a Place for Christian burial”.

Lot 228, containing one acre, is “for a lot or place whereon to build a Meeting House for performance of Divine Worship by those of the Persuasion commonly called Antipedo Baptists and for a place for Christian burial”.

Lot 225, containing one acre, is “for a Place whereon to build a Grammar School wherein to teach Grammar and other Literature the Master of which shall be Licensed by the Bishop of London for the time being or his commissary in South Carolina for the time being” and approved by a majority of the inhabitants of the town.

The two town lots Nos. 149 and 150, containing together one acre, were for “a Tholsel Town House Court house and Prison” whenever the Town should be incorporated by Charter from the King.

Lot 229, at the head of Queen Street was for a house of correction.

The market place to be in the Broad Street at the point designated on the plan; and half an acres to be set aside for a battery or post at the point represented on the plan.

All other lots—save and except such lots as had been already sold by Elisha Screven—were to be sold by the trustees to intending inhabitants for £7.10. in provincial currency per lot to be paid to Elisha Screven; after the expiration of five years the price was to be raised to £10. provincial currency per lot and after the expiration of seven years more the price was to be £15. currency per lot.

The value of provincial currency was at that date about in the ratio of seven for one, *i. e.* one pound sterling was worth seven pounds in provincial currency. In cases of purchasers failing to comply with the conditions of sale then lots were to be resold by the trustees and the proceeds

(after paying twenty shillings in currency to Elisha Screven) were to be applied to paying the expenses of a pilot and pilot boat for the port of Winyah and of any suits brought against the trustees, etc., etc.

All sales of lots were to be on condition that the purchasers should within eighteen months erect a brick or framed house not less than 22 x 16 feet with brick chimneys.

The vacant land between the street commonly called the Bay and low water mark were always to remain open and vacant but with the right to owners of lots fronting on the Bay to build bridges and wharves to the water.

The owner of each lot was to have a right of common for one horse and one cow, but not for oxen sheep goats or swine.

Lots 33, 34, 65, 66, 185, 186 and 189 were reserved to Elisha Screven.

On the 25th of January, 1734/5, and again subsequently on the 5th of July, 1735, the trustees published notice in *The South-Carolina Gazette* that they would meet at the house of Thomas Bolen in George Town to sign titles, etc., etc.

When, in 1735, John Cleland and his wife arrived in the Province they found the lands devised by John Perrie to his daughter, or a large part of them, in possession of Mr. Elisha Screven and that the town of George Town has been already laid off on a portion of them.

On the 10th of July, 1735, the following notice appears in the *Gazette*:

Whereas the great part of George Town Winyaw stands upon Lands formerly granted to John Perrie Esq and now belongs to his Daughter Mary the wife of Mr. John Cleland of Charles Town Merchant; to prevent future inconveniences and complaints, all persons concerned are hereby informed, that no lawful Power or Authority hath hitherto been given for the Sale or Deposition of any part of the said Lands; whereof they are desired to take this Publick Notice By order of Mr. Cleland and his lady

James Græme.

James Græme was then a lawyer practicing in the Province at Charles Town and afterwards became Chief-Justice of the Province.



There is nothing now on the record to show the further progress of the controversy as to the ownership of George Town. We find that on the 1st of January, 1736, John Cleland subscribed £200. for building the church at George Town, or 100 acres for a glebe.

An adjustment, however, was reached. Some compensation seems to have been paid to Mr. Screven and the Clelands were reinstated in possession of all their lands outside of George Town.

With regard to George Town a full deed of adjustment and settlement was entered into<sup>9</sup>.

This deed is dated June 30, 1737, and is between John Cleland and "Mary his wife daughter and devisee of John Perrie formerly of the Island of Antigua but late of the Parish of St James Westminster", Elisha Screven, George Pawley, William Swinton and Daniel La Roche, trustees, and all the parties to whom lots had been sold. The titles to all lots sold were confirmed by John Cleland and wife upon the payment to them of £18. provincial currency for each lot.

The reservation of lots 33, 34, 65, 66, 185, 186, and 199 to Elisha Screven is also confirmed free from the payment of the £18. per lot.

Lots 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 149 and 150 are also confirmed and set aside for the purposes designated in the original deed made by Elisha Screven and the same provision is made with regard to the market place.

Lots 202 and 203 are set apart for the purpose of a parsonage or glebe for the rector of the town. Lots, 11, 48, 121, 122, 123, 124, 183, 166, 167, 191, 194, 196, and 214 are declared to belong to John Cleland freed from all conditions.

The lands lying between the front of Bay Street and low water mark are declared to belong to the owners of the lots fronting on such lands; provided that no buildings

---

<sup>9</sup>Mesne Conveyance records, Charleston, book M M, p. 1.

should be erected on them to obstruct the prospect but that storehouses might be built if their roofs did not exceed 15 feet in height computed from low water mark.

Five more lots were added on the front. These lots were added at the place marked "Fort" on the plan and were designated as A. B. C. D. E. These five lots were excepted from all conditions.

All persons who failed to pay the £18. to John Cleland on or before June 30, 1737, were to forfeit their lots to him.

The one hundred acres originally set aside as a common were restored to the Clelands and in their place they conveyed to the trustees one hundred and thirty acres lying to the west of the town for a common for the inhabitants of the town under the same limitations as to use prescribed in the first deed of Elisha Screven.

In addition to all this, the Clelands by the terms of the deed were allowed to add eighty-eight lots to the town. These were added in two sections. One on the west side running from Bay Street to Church Street and between Wood Street and a new street styled Cleland Street; and the other on the east side, running from Bay to Church Street and between Cannon Street and a new street styled St. James Street.

This last deed from John Cleland refers to an attached plan setting out all these additions.

There is now no plan attached to the copy on record. If there ever was one it has been removed. The original must have been in existence as late as 1800, for it seems to have been used in evidence in the case of *Commissioners vs Taylor* which was tried in that year. The question in that case was the right of Mr. Cleland to sell off two squares in this addition to the town made by him and include the street separating them.<sup>10</sup> The only plan on the record is that attached to the original deed from Elisha Screven. The copy of this plan on the record omits the names of two of the streets running east and west. From the boundaries

---

<sup>10</sup>2 Bay's Reports, p. 282.

given in conveyances of lots we find the names of these streets were Prince Street, for the one next north of Front Street, and Market Street, for the one next north of Prince. There is in existence the copy of the plan of Georgetown made by John Hardwick, surveyor, in May, 1798. This shows distinctly the location of the common conveyed by Cleland and also the position and location of the eighty-eight town lots added by him. From this map it also appears that an addition of ninety-one lots was made to the east of St. James Street and south of Market Street as continued. The date of this addition is not given but it is stated to have been made by Charles Brown, Esq., and Dr. Joseph Blythe, and is called Brown Town. It is to be noted that the street on the plan annexed to the deed from Elisha Screven called "Common Street" is erroneously so denominated. The real name would seem to have been "Cannon", not "Common", Street. It is styled "Cannon" Street in a deed dated July 4, 1745, of lot E from John Cleland and wife. At the same time it is possible that when the common was removed from the north to the west of the town and this street no longer led to it that the name was changed.

More might be added to this article as to the subsequent owners of the lots in George Town and its commercial history and development previous to and during the Revolution, the location and construction of the fort which was erected for the town's protection and occupied at successive periods by both the contending forces, and the events of which the town was the scene during that period, but the space already taken up by this account of its founding has been too great for the limitations of one number of this magazine.

The list of lot owners subjoined is taken from the deed from John Cleland and wife dated June 30, 1737.

It is worthy of note that the daughter of John and Mary Cleland married Francis Kinloch, son of Hon. James Kinloch for many years a member of His Majesty's Council for South Carolina, and that a descendant of Francis Kin-

loch, Miss Harriott Kinloch, married the late Henry A. Middleton, Esq., whose descendants still retain in possession and ownership the Weehaw plantation, a portion of the lands originally granted to John Perrie.

List of lot owners of Georgetown as existing June 30, 1737.

No. of lot. Name of owner

1. Anthony White.
2. Anthony White.
3. Anthony White.
4. Robert Stewart.
5. Anthony White.
6. Anthony White.
7. Anthony White.
8. Anthony White.
9. John Lane.
10. John Lane.
11. John Cleland.
12. Joseph Colkin.
13. Othniel Beale.
14. Peter and James Cleopas Simonds.
15. Arthur Forster.
16. Arthur Forster.
17. Anthony White.
18. William Swinton.
19. John White.
20. Anthony White.
21. Thomas Blundell.
22. Thomas Gadsden.
23. Daniel Crawford.
24. William Wallis.
25. John Wallis.
26. Wm. Romsey & Co.
27. Robert Screven.
28. William Screven.
29. John Sallens.
30. Thomas Henning.
31. George Pawley.

32. George Pawley.
33. Elisha Screven.
34. Elisha Screven.
35. William Romsey & Co.
36. William Romsey & Co.
37. Daniel LaRoche & Co.
38. Mary LaRoche.
39. Thomas Burton.
40. Edmund Hawkins.
41. William Waties.
42. William Waties.
43. John Beresford.
44. John Beresford.
45. Isaac LeGrand Donnerville.
46. Isaac LeGrand Donnerville.
47. William Allston.
48. John Cleland.
49. Anthony White.
50. Anthony White.
51. Anthony White.
52. Anthony White.
53. John Lane.
54. Christopher Cane.
55. Christopher Cane.
56. Arthur Forster.
57. William Swinton.
58. John Arthur.
59. Daniel LaRoche and Thomas LaRoche.
60. John Lawrance.
61. Thomas Landen.
62. Thomas Bolem.
63. William Anderson.
64. Pierce Pawley.
65. Elisha Screven.
66. Elisha Screven.
67. William Cripps.
68. Peter and James Cleopas Simonds.
69. William Waties.

70. John Beresford.
71. Isaac LeGrand Donnerville.
72. Henry Toomer.
73. Meredith Hughes.
74. John Richardson.
75. Robert Ellis.
76. Robert Ellis.
77. Edmund Hawkins.
78. James Baxter.
79. Robert Wright.
80. Robert Wright.
81. Joseph Commander.
82. John Abbott.
83. Othniel Beale.
84. Anthony White.
85. John Abbott.
86. John McKeever.
87. William Thomas.
88. John Abbott.
89. Isaac Chardon.
90. Isaac Chardon.
91. Daniel Bourgett.
92. Thomas Hurst.
93. John White.
94. John Allston.
95. George Pawley.
96. George Pawley.
97. John Richardson.
98. Meredith Hughes.
99. Thomas Hurst.
100. Thomas Hurst.
101. Daniel Crawford.
102. Daniel Crawford.
103. Pierce Pawley.
104. Alexander Skene.
105. John Commander.
106. Othniel Beale.
107. Othniel Beale.

108. Thomas Hurst.
109. Thomas Bolem.
110. Thomas Charnock.
111. Daniel Bourgett.
112. Daniel Bourgett.
113. Mary Smith.
114. Joseph Allein.
115. John Jordan.
116. Thomas Blyth.
117. William Swinton.
118. Christopher Seamour.
119. George Pawley.
120. George Pawley.
121. John Cleland.
122. John Cleland.
123. John Cleland.
124. John Cleland.
125. Alexander Robertson.
126. Alexander Robertson.
127. Thomas Landen.
128. James Stewart.
129. Anthony Atkinson.
130. Anthony Atkinson.
131. William Allston.
132. Meredith Hughes.
133. John Sandiford.
134. John Sandiford.
135. William Screven.
136. William Screven.
137. Joshua Peart.
138. Joshua Peart.
139. William Waties.
140. William Cripps.
141. William Waties.
142. William Waties.
143. Dennis Hankins.
144. George Pawley.
145. Daniel LaRoche.

146. Thomas LaRoche.
147. John Ouldfeld.
148. Elias Foissin.
149. Town House or "Tholsel".
150. Town House or "Tholsel".
151. Daniel LaRoche and Thomas LaRoche.
152. Daniel LaRoche and Thomas LaRoche.
153. William Tilley.
154. Meredith Hughes.
155. Thomas Bolem.
156. Thomas Bolem.
157. Abraham Bond.
158. Abraham Bond.
159. John Wallis.
160. William Hinckley.
161. William Waties.
162. Nathaniel Broughton.
163. Andrew Broughton.
164. William Waties.
165. William Allston.
166. John Cleland.
167. John Cleland.
168. John Jordan.
169. Meredith Hughes.
170. Meredith Hughes.
171. Stephen Heartley.
172. Charles Hope.
173. Alexander Robertson.
174. Alexander Robertson.
175. John Thompson, Jr.
176. William Swinton.
177. William Swinton.
178. Nicholas Trott.
179. Nicholas Trott.
180. William Borlen.
181. Joseph Goude.
182. Daniel Dwight.
183. John Cleland.



184. Pierce Pawley.
185. Elisha Screven.
186. Elisha Screven.
187. John Atchison.
188. John Atchison.
189. William Allston.
190. Nicholas Trott.
191. John Cleland.
192. John Jordan.
193. William Romsey.
194. John Cleland.
195. Stephen Beauchamp.
196. John Cleland.
197. James Atkins.
198. James Atkins.
199. Elisha Screven.
200. William Swinton.
201. William Swinton.
202. Parsonage and Glebe.
203. Parsonage and Glebe.
204. Daniel LaRoche and Thomas LaRoche.
205. Daniel LaRoche and Thomas LaRoche.
206. James Abercromby.
207. Samuel Jennings.
208. Pierce Pawley.
209. Stephen Beauchamp.
210. Alexander Nisbett.
211. William Colt.
212. William Colt.
213. William Allston.
214. John Cleland.
215. Nicholas Trott.
216. John Coachman.
217. Peter and James Cleopas Simonds.
218. Meredith Hughes.
219. Meredith Hughes.
220. Robert Stewart.
221. Robert Johnston.

GEORGETOWN—ORIGINAL PLAN, EARLIEST SETTLERS 101

- 222. Josiah Smith.
- 223. George Smith.
- 224. George Smith.
- 225. Free School.
- 226. Presbyterian Church.
- 227. Church of England.
- 228. Antipedo Baptist Church.
- 229. House of Correction.
  - A. Isaac LeGrand Donnerville.
  - B. Charles Pinckney.
  - C. Benjamin Whitaker.
  - D. Richard Allein.
  - E. John Cleland.